United Nations S/2006/222

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 April 2006

Original: English

Eighth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1603 (2005) of 3 June 2005, by which the Council requested me to keep it regularly informed of developments in Côte d'Ivoire, the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and of the Linas-Marcoussis and Pretoria Agreements. The present report covers developments since my report of 3 January 2006 (S/2006/2).

II. Political developments

2. In my last report, I informed the Council that Charles Konan Banny was appointed on 7 December 2005 as Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire for the transition period. On 28 December 2005, Prime Minister Banny appointed his 32-member Cabinet, which consists of all parties that are signatories to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The Cabinet includes two senior Ministers, namely, Guillaume Soro, the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, who is in charge of reconstruction, and Antoine Bouabré of the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), who is in charge of development; and five Forces nouvelles ministers, as well as two independent Ministers, of Defence and the Interior, respectively. Mr. Banny also assumes the functions of Minister of Economy and Finance, as well as of Communication. My Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Pierre Schori, immediately started to work with the new Government, to which he handed over the road map for peace developed by the International Working Group.

3. While the appointment of the Cabinet was an encouraging step forward in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, this positive development was briefly overshadowed by the attack on military barracks in the Akouédo district of Abidjan by a group of armed persons on 2 January. Although the attack failed, it heightened the feeling of insecurity prevailing among the population, particularly in Abidjan, and further undermined confidence among the Ivorian parties. The Government's investigation is inconclusive.

4. From 15 to 20 January, the Young Patriots organized violent demonstrations in Abidjan and in western areas of the country ostensibly to protest against a communiqué issued by the International Working Group at its third meeting, held in

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Abidjan on 15 January, in which the Group noted that the mandate of the National Assembly, which had expired on 16 December 2005, should not be extended. The communiqué further called on the President, Laurent Gbagbo, and Prime Minister Banny to hold consultations on how best to make use of the experience of the parliamentarians who had served on the National Assembly to promote the peace process. The demonstrations proved to be a well-orchestrated action stemming from a deliberate falsification of the above-mentioned communiqué to the effect that the Group "had decided to dissolve the National Assembly in contravention of the country's sovereignty".

5. The demonstrations represented a breach of Security Council resolution 1643 (2005), as well as the Presidential decree of 12 December 2005 banning any street demonstrations. The virulent anti-United Nations propaganda and incitement to violence, especially on the Radio Télévision ivoirienne (RTI) and local radio networks, resulted in the extensive looting and destruction of assets and property of United Nations and humanitarian agencies in the western towns of Daloa and San-Pédro, and most seriously in Guiglo. The UNOCI headquarters in Abidjan, the French Embassy and the 43rd French marine infantry battalion were besieged and repeatedly attacked for several days by crowds of the Young Patriots. The situation was exacerbated by serious inflammatory statements, including by the Chairman of the ruling FPI party, Pascal Affi Nguessan. During the siege, United Nations property suffered extensive damage. In Guiglo, groups of people incited by hate media attacked UNOCI troops, forcing them to use their rules of engagement to ensure their own safety. Those same groups pillaged and burned the offices of humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations, while their staff were molested and chased from their houses, which were also vandalized. The direct threats to United Nations personnel led to a temporary relocation to safe havens of staff based in the west and in Abidjan.

6. On 18 January, the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Chairman of the African Union, visited Abidjan to help defuse the situation. As a result of that visit, President Gbagbo and President Obasanjo issued a joint communiqué, in which they called on all involved to cease violent action. The communiqué further called on the President and the Prime Minister to reach an agreement on the issue of the National Assembly. Following President Obasanjo's intervention, the demonstrations by the Young Patriots ceased.

7. On 27 January, on the basis of a recommendation made by the Constitutional Council on 15 December 2005, President Gbagbo signed a decree extending the mandate of the National Assembly. Opposition party leaders and the Forces nouvelles rejected the extension as a flagrant violation of the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire and Security Council resolution 1633 (2005). From 9 to 16 February, the former Speaker of the National Assembly called for an extraordinary session of the Parliament to review the extension of the mandates of mayors. Only 102 of the 202 parliamentarians, primarily from FPI, attended the session, while most of the representatives from the opposition boycotted the meeting. The matter remains to be resolved, and current reports that another extraordinary session of the National Assembly might soon be convened may undermine the progress recently achieved and jeopardize the implementation of the next phases of the peace process.

8. During the whole period of the crisis, I stayed in close contact with main stakeholders, including the African Union and its new Chairman, President Sassou

Nguesso, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), President Obasanjo and the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, as well as Prime Minister Banny. On 29 January, I issued a statement expressing my concern about the Presidential decree of 27 January on the National Assembly, noting that it did not appear to be in conformity with the information received from President Obasanjo and from UNOCI on the outcome of the visit of the President of Nigeria to Abidjan. On 1 February, in the light of continuing incitement to violence, I issued a further statement reminding the highest civilian and military authorities of Côte d'Ivoire, including President Gbagbo and the Chief of Staff, General Mangou, of their personal responsibility to prevent violence in the country, including attacks perpetrated against United Nations personnel and installations, as well as ethnic groups.

9. In spite of those setbacks, several important steps were taken, subsequently, by the Prime Minister, in close cooperation with UNOCI, to proceed with the implementation of the road map for peace drawn up by the International Working Group. From 9 to 11 February, at the initiative of the Prime Minister, the Government held a seminar in Yamoussoukro, which was attended by most of the Cabinet Ministers, including the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro. The seminar agreed to establish monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the key aspects of the road map, including disarmament, redeployment of State administration, identification of the population and conduct of elections.

10. On 17 February, the International Working Group held its fourth meeting in Abidjan. It congratulated the Prime Minister on his initiative to convene the Yamoussoukro seminar and the seminar's conclusions. The Group also welcomed the cooperation between the President and the Prime Minister and asked the Ivorian parties to proceed without delay with the disarmament and identification processes. It appealed to the parties to commit themselves to strictly comply with the ban on public demonstrations and to refrain from inflammatory statements or actions likely to exacerbate tensions. The Group also underlined the need to enhance the security of the personnel and equipment of RTI and to ensure its independence and the equitable access of all Ivorian parties to its broadcasts.

11. In keeping with a recommendation of the Yamoussoukro seminar, Prime Minister Banny convened a meeting of the main political leaders on 28 February. In attendance were President Gbagbo; the President of the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, Henri Konan Bédié; the President of the Rassemblement des Républicains, Alassane Ouattara; and the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro. This was the first gathering of these leaders in Côte d'Ivoire since the crisis began in September 2002. In a communiqué issued at the conclusion of the meeting, the Ivorian leaders reiterated their readiness to engage in constructive dialogue. They further observed that Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) did not contradict the Ivorian Constitution, and should be complied with in a constructive, consensual and coherent manner.

12. The communiqué also stressed that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process should commence without further delay. With regard to identification and preparations for elections, the Ivorian leaders agreed that the two processes should begin simultaneously. They also emphasized the central role of RTI in reconciliation, as well as the need to ensure equitable access of all parties to

the RTI broadcasting facilities, noting the positive role of the media in the process. With the active participation of the High Representative for the elections, Antonio Monteiro, an agreement was also reached to ensure a balanced representation of political forces within the bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission, thereby ending a protracted political stalemate in the Commission, which had threatened to delay preparations for the elections.

13. On 14 March, Guillaume Soro arrived in Abidjan, after an absence of 16 months from the economic capital, with a security detail provided by UNOCI and Licorne. Upon his arrival, Mr. Soro had a meeting with President Gbagbo, after which he declared to the media that "the resumption of political dialogue will find its prolongation through military talks". This was the first meeting of President Gbagbo and Mr. Soro in Abidjan since September 2002; on 15 March, the latter participated, for the first time since the formation of the new Government, in a Cabinet meeting chaired by the President.

14. Furthermore, the International Working Group held its fifth meeting in Abidjan on 17 March. In a final communiqué, the Group welcomed the new spirit of dialogue among the Ivorian political class since the meeting held in Yamoussoukro on 28 February. The communiqué further urged the Independent Electoral Commission to ensure that the elections would be held no later than 31 October, as scheduled. At the same time, it expressed deep concern about the repeated obstruction to the freedom of movement of the impartial forces, in violation of resolution 1643 (2005), and strongly condemned the persistent violations of human rights, in particular attacks perpetrated against opposition Ministers.

15. On 25 March, the Prime Minister held consultations with the leaders of Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso to brief them on developments in Côte d'Ivoire, and urged them to continue to support his Government's efforts to restore peace and stability.

16. The resumption of dialogue among the parties, the end of the protracted stalemate over the Independent Election Commission and the return of the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles to the Government are encouraging developments. These developments, if sustained, could put the peace process back on track. It is therefore crucial for UNOCI to be adequately equipped in a timely manner, so that it can fully support the implementation of the road map as it gathers pace.

17. The recent positive steps taken by the parties have eased tensions and improved the overall political atmosphere, which has created space for the redeployment of UNOCI troops and the resumption of humanitarian activities in the west. It has also allowed the Government to focus on other priority issues, such as the revitalization of the economy.

III. Security situation

18. As a result of the violent demonstrations organized by the Young Patriots, without any resistance on the part of the authorities and often with their silent abetting, from 15 to 20 January, the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire deteriorated sharply at the beginning of the year. There were serious obstructions to the freedom of movement of the impartial forces, interruption of socio-economic activities and

rampant insecurity in Abidjan, as well as in various parts of Government-controlled areas, particularly Guiglo, Daloa, San-Pédro and Yamoussoukro. In the western part of the country, the violent attacks, supported or allowed by the authorities, targeted at United Nations and humanitarian personnel led to the deaths of five rioters and the relocation of UNOCI camps from Guiglo, Toulépleu, Duékoué and Bloléquin to the zone of confidence. The growing insecurity and the temporary departure of UNOCI troops, under pressure and violence, from the western part of the country also forced United Nations agencies to relocate their personnel. This caused a dangerous security and humanitarian vacuum in those areas: nearly 14,000 internally displaced persons, refugees and ethnic minorities living there were left unprotected. Humanitarian activities came to a standstill as a result of the destruction by protesters of the offices of the United Nations and those of other humanitarian agencies, their relief supplies, warehouses, communications and other equipment. I have written to President Gbagbo requesting the Ivorian authorities to reimburse the United Nations for the resulting damage, estimated at $3.6 million. I am still awaiting a reply to that letter.

19. In order to minimize high security threats against UNOCI personnel during the January disturbances, the mission relocated 382 staff to the designated safe haven area in the region, using air assets from UNOCI and MONUC. The relocation, which began on 25 January was completed on 28 February, when the last group of staff returned to Abidjan.

20. In the meantime, UNOCI developed detailed plans to return to its former locations in the west. On 19 March, an advanced UNOCI joint military/police group was successfully deployed in Toulépleu and, on 28 March, an infantry company was deployed in Bloléquin. As part of the lessons learned from the January disturbances, personnel of formed police units are being deployed alongside the United Nations troops returning to the west, to ensure a crowd control capacity. The redeployment will subsequently cover Guiglo and Duékoué. UNOCI has engaged the Ivorian authorities at the highest levels, including President Gbagbo, Prime Minister Banny and General Mangou, to assist in facilitating the timely and smooth redeployment of United Nations personnel. The redeployment has nevertheless been hampered by the opposition of local authorities and some radical groups.

21. The security situation in the western part of the country remains highly volatile. Several incidents between Licorne and the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) occurred around the villages of Bouenneu and Zouan Hounien from 26 February to 2 March, in what appear to be deliberate attempts to obstruct Licorne's freedom of movement. On two occasions, armed FANCI soldiers infiltrated the zone of confidence at Bouenneu and harassed French soldiers maintaining the integrity of the zone. A French patrol escorting a FANCI team outside of the zone of confidence was threatened at gun point. Inhabitants of Bouenneu have reported that they were being harassed by FANCI elements who accuse them of supporting Licorne. After a rather prolonged and dangerous confrontation, a meeting between the UNOCI and Licorne Force Commanders and the FANCI Chief of Staff finally helped to defuse tensions.

22. On 7 February, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) imposed targeted sanctions on two leaders of the Young Patriots, Charles Blé Goudé and Eugene Djué, as well as the Zone Commander of the Forces nouvelles in Korhogo, Fofié Kouakou. While the latter was not involved

in the events that affected Abidjan in mid-January, he was considered responsible for the recruitment of child soldiers, forced labour, arbitrary arrests and gross human rights abuses committed by forces under his control. In contrast to earlier threats to unleash a new wave of violence against United Nations personnel and property, the leaders of the Young Patriots called on their followers not to react.

23. In the meantime, UNOCI has continued to carry out its Security Council-mandated tasks. Energetic efforts continued to be made to promote confidence among various groups of the population and cooperation between the factions. UNOCI conducted robust mobile patrolling of the zone of confidence, with a view to preventing hostilities and enhancing the visibility of the Operation, including in remote areas. During the period under review, UNOCI also carried out 120 arms embargo inspections in both the Government and rebel-held areas, and is monitoring vital air and sea ports for any illegal transportation of arms and equipment. So far, there has been no indication of any major violation of the embargo. UNOCI has also recently recruited an arms embargo expert to strengthen the mission's capacity to carry out effective inspections.

24. At the same time, UNOCI has taken several measures to improve its state of preparedness to prevent or address future disturbances, and has placed special emphasis on enhancing the defence of all UNOCI compounds. A coordination and security team has been designated in each United Nations site in Abidjan to enhance command and control and coordination. Also, the layout at the Operation's headquarters in Abidjan has been fully reviewed to prepare for a better defence of the site.

25. In addition, UNOCI has established a security sub-office at Duékoué, which has the task of monitoring the activities of United Nations agencies in the Guiglo sector. The sub-office will also serve as a liaison body with the local military administrations of the Region of Moyen Cavally.

IV. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1633 (2005)

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

26. On 24 March, President Gbagbo appointed General Gaston Koné (PDCI) as Coordinator of the National Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. The appointment was welcomed by the parties, who also expressed their readiness to advance the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. In the meantime, the Programme is undergoing restructuring, in which it is envisaged that the Ministry of Defence will receive an additional role in this crucial area. However, the sequencing of the exercise is expected to remain as foreseen in the Yamoussoukro timetable signed on 9 July 2005 by FANCI and the Forces nouvelles. The chiefs of staff of FANCI and the Forces nouvelles, who met on 1 April in Yamoussoukro, are expected to agree shortly on the modalities for the commencement of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which needs to start without delay.

27. The military and police tasks of UNOCI in direct support of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme will include securing of disarmament and cantonment sites; assuming security functions previously undertaken by the disarmed troops in the north, alongside 600 Ivorian security auxiliaries trained

earlier by UNOCI; escorting and/or providing transportation to former combatants in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration zones; responding to any disturbances in and around the camps, including riots and violent demonstrations; providing weapons control and destruction facilities; and ensuring a secure environment.

28. With regard to the financing of the programme, the Government must make urgent arrangements to clear its outstanding arrears to the World Bank, before the Bank will provide $80 million that it had committed for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. If the grant is indeed provided, the remaining gap for the programme will still amount to some $35 million, for which the Government pledged $18 million from its 2006 budget. The availability of secured resources from Government and donor sources, prior to launching the programme, would be highly preferable. The total cost of the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is estimated at $150 million. In view of the complexity of the programme and its linkages to other crucial areas of the peace process, such as the disarmament and disbandment of militias and the reform of the armed forces, UNOCI and its international partners, as well as the donor community, should be prepared to provide the support it may require.

Disarmament and dismantling of militias and the restructuring of the army

29. In the meantime, UNOCI is providing technical assistance to the Office of the Prime Minister to work out a comprehensive approach to disarmament, which will include the disarmament and dismantling of militias and the restructuring of the army, once the restructuring of the National Programme is completed. The support of UNOCI will also include monitoring and/or ensuring the destruction or neutralization of the weapons surrendered by the militias, while providing the Government with assistance in responding to disturbances that might disrupt the process.

Redeployment of State administration

30. The Comité national de pilotage du redéploiement de l'administration, which has been restructured to increase its effectiveness, began its operations on 16 February, with UNOCI support. An estimated total of 24,400 civil servants were displaced during the conflict. So far, only about 6,000 have been redeployed in their areas of responsibility, mainly in the southern and western areas of the country under Government control. Some 20,000 civil servants need to be redeployed in areas currently under the control of the Forces nouvelles. UNOCI will be required to provide a secure environment for this process, which is expected to run in parallel with the identification and electoral registration. UNOCI has encouraged the Committee to begin a pilot project involving the redeployment of a small number of employees willing to return. Civil servants from the Ministry of Tourism and the Chamber of Trade returned to Bouaké in March. The continued redeployment will, however, require donor assistance because of the inability of the Government to provide all necessary funds.

31. In a positive development, discussions between the Government and the Forces nouvelles resulted in the conduct of school examinations in Forces nouvelles-controlled areas, for the first time in three years. From 27 February to 4 March, UNOCI provided logistical and transportation support and security

protection for 45 testing centres in sector east and 22 centres in sector west, while the European Union provided financial assistance and the United Nations agencies provided technical assistance. Almost 60,000 students sat for various school examinations, which are scheduled to be completed by 6 April.

Identification process

32. A working group on identification and elections established under the supervision of the Prime Minister produced a report early in March with specific recommendations aimed at facilitating the process and identifying potential difficulties. Its recommendation to conduct the identification process and the registration of voters simultaneously was endorsed by the Cabinet. However, since no judicial mechanisms exist in the north and in the zone of confidence, and given that many civil register records are missing, a considerable number of potential voters may not be able to obtain documents confirming their nationality or age and thus to prove their eligibility to vote. The modalities for the creation of mobile courts for this purpose are currently under consideration, to allow potential voters to be issued with new national identity cards or other legal identification papers. The process of identifying an estimated 12 million people over 13 years of age will be daunting.

33. Furthermore, there is still a divergence of views among the parties on the modalities of implementing the identification process, with some still calling for a general identification separate from the voter registration exercise. Some parties have also called for the United Nations to play a major role in guaranteeing the credibility, transparency and security of the identification process.

34. Moreover, as the issue of nationality and citizenship is at the heart of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, the identification period is likely to be extremely tense. In areas under the control of the Forces nouvelles, UNOCI must be prepared to provide security as State authority has yet to be extended in those areas. In some areas in the south, where ethnic tensions are high, UNOCI will also need to provide security if required.

Preparations for elections

35. Following intense negotiations led by the High Representative for the elections and the Prime Minister, the stalemate which prevented the Independent Electoral Commission from becoming operational since it was sworn into office on 17 October 2005 was resolved. On 16 February, the High Representative issued a communiqué confirming that the election of the Bureau of the Electoral Commission, which was held on 19 October 2005 but was contested by supporters of President Gbagbo, was in conformity with the Pretoria Agreement. On the basis of this determination, the key Ivorian leaders, meeting under the Prime Minister's auspices in Yamoussoukro on 28 February, agreed on proposals for the attribution of posts within the Bureau of the Commission to ensure a balanced representation of political forces. Following that agreement, the restructured Commission was formally inaugurated on 9 March. Since then, the Commission has been focused on a number of priority issues, and has benefited from UNOCI assistance. The electoral process remains fragile, however, and it is important that all Ivorian parties show restraint and maintain a constructive engagement in order to help consolidate the work of the Commission.

36. In accordance with its mandate, UNOCI will provide support for the organization of the elections, and, if adequately strengthened, contribute to the general security in main voting areas. UNOCI has already deployed electoral advisers to prepare for the establishment of the local branches of the Electoral Commission. In total, security should be ensured for 11,000 voter registration sites, the distribution and storage of electoral materials, and 18,000 polling stations. Security will also be needed during the pre-election campaign period. The new Chairman of the Commission has also recently requested UNOCI to provide security to the members of the Commission.

37. In my letter dated 3 November 2005 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2005/707), I informed the Council that anticipated donor contributions to support the work of the High Representative for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire and his office had yet to materialize. Since then, the European Commission, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have generously contributed, altogether, almost $1.2 million to a $3.6 million project established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide the High Representative with office facilities, personnel, security and administrative services. These much-valued contributions will however be exhausted by the end of June 2006. If the budgetary shortage is not met by that time, it may become necessary to seek funding from assessed contributions.

Forum for National Dialogue

38. The Prime Minister has initiated consultations with all political leaders aimed at securing their agreement to hold a Forum for National Dialogue in the near future to help create a social and political climate conducive to the smooth implementation of the road map. The establishment of such a forum, provided for in the decision adopted by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 6 October 2005 in Addis Ababa (see S/2005/639) and Security Council resolution 1633 (2005), would be particularly important for further peace consolidation in the country.

Financing of the implementation of the road map

39. The Prime Minister's Office has agreed with UNOCI to establish a joint mechanism to prepare for a donor conference, following which a standing resource mobilization committee will be established to pursue fund-raising for the implementation of the road map. In addition, an economic forum, involving donors and the private sector, will be convened shortly to mobilize funds for national reconstruction.

V. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Force deployment

40. As at 31 March, the overall force strength of UNOCI stood at 6,893 military personnel (see annex), against an authorized strength of 7,090. The shortfall is due to the lack of a much-needed military aviation unit, for which no firm offers have been made so far. Negotiations are however under way with Ghana, which could result in the deployment of such a unit early in May.

Police deployment

41. As at 31 March, the United Nations overall police strength stood at 696 police personnel, including three formed police units. Over 70 police personnel have been deployed to areas under the control of the Forces nouvelles to ensure security during the school examination period.

42. As a result of the January disturbances, United Nations police activities were suspended in Guiglo, San-Pédro and Daloa and police personnel were relocated. United Nations police personnel have since returned to San-Pédro, however.

43. As was indicated in paragraph 20 above, on the basis of lessons learned during the January disturbances, and to assist in addressing the security threats in Abidjan ahead of the fourth meeting of the International Working Group on 17 February, two sections of the formed police units based in Daloa and Bouaké were temporarily redeployed to Abidjan. The formed police units have proved to be effective in providing support for addressing civil disturbances in areas where they were deployed.

Security of the members of the transition Government

44. The UNOCI Sous-Groupement de Sécurité continues to provide security mainly to Ministers of the transition Government and signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. While the national authorities are constantly reminded of their primary responsibility for guaranteeing the security of their citizens, these arrangements have contributed to enhancing the confidence and security of key personalities in the peace process. The workload of the unit has increased significantly since the return of Messrs. Bédié, Ouattara and Soro to Abidjan. UNOCI urgently needs reinforcements for the Sous-Groupement de Sécurité, in line with the recommendations made in my previous reports, as its resources are permanently overstretched and below established standards for close protection operations.

Reinforcements

45. Following the crisis of 15 to 20 January, in a letter dated 1 February addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/71), I recommended the emergency redeployment of one infantry battalion and one formed police unit from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to UNOCI, on a temporary basis. By its resolution 1657 (2006), the Council approved the temporary redeployment of one mechanized infantry company, which was completed on 16 February. The arrival of the infantry company served as a timely deterrent, as it occurred on the eve of the fourth meeting of the International Working Group. The transfer of the company has also enhanced the response preparedness of UNOCI, in particular because of the considerable force multipliers, such as armoured personnel carriers and other assets, that the company brought to Abidjan. It is also assessed as having had an important stabilizing impact in Abidjan.

46. This reinforcement is limited and temporary, however, and an urgent decision on the reinforcements proposed in my report of 3 January is needed, especially in view of the decision to move the company back to UNMIL, which was implied in Council resolution 1667 (2006). The capacity of UNOCI to deal with the established timelines for the implementation of the road map and to curb further disturbances

needs to be considerably enhanced. There is still a serious risk of a sudden deterioration of the security situation, triggered by lack of progress in the peace process. It is essential, therefore, to ensure that the credibility of UNOCI and its role in the peace process is not challenged again, and that the Operation is fully equipped to effectively support the objectives set forth by Prime Minister Banny, which have to be achieved in a limited time frame. In this regard, my recommendations, initially expressed in my report of 3 January, to strengthen UNOCI by four battalions, three additional formed police units and 100 civilian police officers, with the commensurate increase in civilian staffing, to support this process and deter spoilers, are even more pressing. It is obvious that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire has important regional dimensions, and its deterioration would inevitably have negative security implications, affecting primarily Liberia and Sierra Leone, where hard-won stability is still fragile.

VI. Justice system

47. UNOCI continued to monitor the overall functioning, effectiveness and independence of the judiciary, and to provide the Ministry of Justice with comprehensive advice to help streamline the Ivorian justice system. That system is affected by many problems, such as political control, corruption, cronyism, nepotism, improper application of the laws and dependence on the executive branch.

48. Access to justice remains a problem, owing to the inadequacy of legal aid schemes and high court fees that are not affordable to the majority of the population. Overall, the general population distrusts the judiciary and the security forces, often preferring not to report crimes or avoiding judicial settlement of disputes whenever possible.

49. There is no functioning justice system in the north. Although UNOCI has helped to train 600 police personnel operating in the north, there are no functioning courts there. The Forces nouvelles have called on UNOCI and the international community to help rehabilitate the judicial system in the north and facilitate the return of judges, as part of the redeployment of State administration.

Prisons

50. The problems facing the prison system in Côte d'Ivoire include malnutrition, overcrowding and absence of health care, which has led to high mortality rates among inmates. The UNOCI prison monitoring programme has kept the prison administration informed of the situation in the prisons under their supervision, as they have no independent means of monitoring the institutions, for lack of transportation.

VII. Humanitarian situation

51. In the wake of the events of mid-January, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, undertook a mission to Côte d'Ivoire from 14 to 17 February. During his meetings with Government authorities in Abidjan, militia groups in Guiglo and the leaders of the Force nouvelles in Bouaké, the Emergency Relief Coordinator reaffirmed the

neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian workers and condemned the destruction of humanitarian assets and the incitement to violence through hate media as violations of national and international law. He demanded that the Ivorian parties guarantee the security of all civilians, including humanitarian personnel. He also called for the perpetrators of violent acts against humanitarian personnel and civilians to be brought to justice.

52. The crisis of protection in Côte d'Ivoire is one of the greatest challenges facing the country. While the division of the country has spurred the rapid decline in the provision of health, education, water and sanitation and other basic services in the north, massive abuses against the civilian population, particularly minority groups, continue in the west. Following the evacuation of United Nations humanitarian workers from Guiglo, some 6,000 Liberian refugees, 7,000 internally displaced persons and 35,000 malnourished children, who had been receiving emergency school feeding, were left with limited access to humanitarian aid. Early in February, the World Food Programme and the International Organization of Migration, in collaboration with the non-governmental organizations remaining in the area, organized the delivery and distribution of one to two months' food rations to the most vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, a sensitization campaign was launched by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to promote the voluntary return of Liberian refugees, resulting in the assisted return, as at 14 March, of 14,564 Liberian refugees.

53. Pending the re-establishment of security in the area, United Nations agencies have set up temporary offices in Duékoué to oversee relief activities in Guiglo. In order to fund immediate life-saving operations, the Emergency Relief Coordinator has approved the disbursement of more than $950,600 from the newly established Central Emergency Response Fund.

54. As of March 2006, the United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Côte d'Ivoire had received only 2 per cent of the $40.5 million being sought. This severely limits the scope of much-needed humanitarian programmes in the sectors of health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture and food security, protection and human rights, education, coordination and security.

VIII. Human rights

55. Serious human rights violations continue to be committed in Côte d'Ivoire, mainly by elements of the Defence and Security Forces in the Government-controlled south, elements of the Forces nouvelles in the northern zone under their control, and militias on both sides of the Ivorian conflict. As in the past, human rights violations documented by UNOCI include summary executions, disappearances and death threats, rape and sexual exploitation, human trafficking, torture, and inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as interference with freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom of association.

56. Impunity continues to be a major contributing factor to the worsening human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Repeated appeals by UNOCI and other international actors to civilian and military authorities to institute criminal proceedings against elements of the Defence and Security Forces in the south, and of the Forces nouvelles in the north, who have committed serious human rights violations, have remained unheeded. The imposition of sanctions by the Security

Council early in February against a commanding officer of the Forces nouvelles for human rights violations is a welcome signal to military and civilian leaders on both sides of the Ivorian crisis that they will henceforth be held personally accountable for serious human rights violations.

57. UNOCI continued to implement its human rights promotion programme, with funding from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In a pilot phase, for which a grant of $25,000 was received, human rights training was conducted for a total of 250 representatives of Government departments, judicial services, local administrations and civil society organizations in Abidjan, Bouaké and Yamoussoukro. Within the same programme, human rights awareness-raising materials, including posters, pamphlets and T-shirts, were produced and distributed to more than 50,000 people in target communities. The Operation is also establishing a field presence in Bouna, Korhogo and Odienné, bringing to eight the number of UNOCI human rights regional offices in the country.

Child protection

58. The recent submission by the Forces nouvelles of an action plan to end the use of child soldiers, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1539 (2005), is an important and welcome step, which is the first of its kind in the experience of United Nations peacekeeping.

59. UNOCI and the non-governmental organization Save the Children have developed a joint training programme for all peacekeepers on basic child rights and protection. In addition, all UNOCI contingents have appointed focal points who receive training on the collection of objective information related to serious violations against children. UNOCI has also designed a database for the classification and management of reports received, which will be used for the transmission of reports to the Security Council Working Group on monitoring and reporting mechanisms established by resolution 1612 (2005).

IX. Media monitoring

60. Sections of the Ivorian media actively participated in propagating calls to violence and stirring up hatred during the attack in Abidjan on 2 January, the third meeting of the International Working Group on 15 January and the period before the imposition of sanctions. Those hate messages were directed mainly against UNOCI and the United Nations in general, the International Working Group, France, and selected local groups. The targets were portrayed as "threats to Côte d'Ivoire, its institutions and national sovereignty". They were sometimes presented as threatening the very existence of the Ivorian nation by being part of a plan to recolonize the country. In some instances, media reports directly appealed to racial sentiments.

61. Some local media also came under pressure during the January disturbances. In Daloa, the local radio station, Tchrato, was attacked and badly damaged. In Abidjan, Radio Télévision Ivoirienne was taken over by the Young Patriots, who used it to mobilize their supporters to attack UNOCI and Licorne. The Young Patriots destroyed the UNOCI transmitter in Guiglo and used the local radio to incite the population to attack the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

62. In an effort to counter the incitement to hatred and violence in the media, UNOCI reinforced its communications strategy, with a view to developing a better understanding of its mandate and role in the peace process. UNOCI also made efforts to counter the disinformation campaign and to explain to the population the functions of the International Working Group, the implications of Security Council resolution 1633 (2006) and the imposition of sanctions. In addition, UNOCI has increased its contacts with RTI to help ensure that the recommendations of the meeting held on 28 February in Yamoussoukro are implemented.

63. During the period under review, UNOCI radio coverage was extended to the north-eastern town of Bouna and the central-eastern town of Daoukro, while a mobile broadcast van was fitted with a transmitter to allow it to accompany field missions to broadcast live reconciliation programmes and other activities. UNOCI FM broadcasts can now be heard in the main cities of the country. In addition, UNOCI launched three new radio programmes. The Operation's FM radio continues to be the sole source of reliable information for many Ivorians.

X. Gender mainstreaming

64. UNOCI gender-mainstreaming activities focused on sensitizing and preparing women to take an active role in the decision-making process, and promoting the rehabilitation of war-affected girls and women. The Gender Unit participated in the training of women candidates for the forthcoming elections, within the framework of long-term cooperation with the Coalition of Women Leaders, a major women's organization in Côte d'Ivoire.

65. In cooperation with UNDP, UNOCI is developing a project for the creation of a centre for women and girls who are the victims of gender-based violence. The centre will also promote capacity-building in human rights issues, women's participation in peace and electoral processes, and the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

66. UNOCI also developed a plan of action for the sensitization of the local police and gendarmerie about gender issues and carried out various induction courses for military and civilian personnel. In addition, UNOCI is actively promoting gender mainstreaming activities in all areas of its work.

XI. HIV/AIDS

67. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1308 (2000), UNOCI continued to integrate HIV/AIDS awareness into its activities, while working with United Nations agencies. UNOCI conducted training of peer educators, voluntary confidential counselling and testing of the awareness-raising, as well as surveys of military and civilian personnel. The results of the surveys showed that, even though the knowledge level of the personnel on HIV/AIDS was acceptable, there were some attitudes and practices that exposed them to the risk of contracting HIV. These results have led to the review of HIV/AIDS awareness modules centred on those identified risk behaviours.

XII. Conduct and Discipline Team

68. UNOCI continues to cooperate with investigations by the Office of Internal Oversight Services into allegations of misconduct by UNOCI personnel. Ten such cases are currently under investigation. My Special Representative has also reviewed current policies on the off-duty activities of UNOCI staff, and made a number of recommendations on matters including restrictions on the movement of staff and vehicles, off-limit locations and staff obligations and responsibilities to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. Efforts are also under way to review all of UNOCI policies related to conduct and to better inform staff members of United Nations directives on conduct issues.

69. In addition, with the assistance of the Integrated Mission Training Unit, the Conduct and Discipline Team continued to oversee the training of UNOCI personnel on the UNOCI code of conduct and raise awareness on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. In cooperation with the Office of Legal Affairs, training of UNOCI personnel continued during the period of relocation in Banjul.

XIII. Observations

70. Despite the serious setback resulting from the January violence in Abidjan and in the west of the country, some encouraging prospects for advancing the Ivorian peace process have emerged as a result of initiatives taken by Prime Minister Banny, with the support of President Gbagbo and other Ivorian leaders. I welcome the mechanisms for the implementation of the road map for peace which were set up during the Government seminar and the meeting of the Ivorian leaders held in Yamoussoukro on 9 to 11 and on 28 February, respectively.

71. In particular, at the Yamoussoukro meeting of 28 February, agreements on a number of outstanding issues were reached, including the disarmament and identification processes, the preparation of elections and the role of the media in the peace process. The Yamoussoukro meeting helped to resolve the serious crisis that had stalled the work of the Independent Electoral Commission since it was reconstituted in October 2005. At the same time, the smooth organization of school examinations in the north, for the first time in three years, represents a promising initial step towards the reunification of the country and the process of national reconciliation. These recent positive developments have eased tensions and improved the overall political climate, thus opening space for the Government to begin implementation of the road map and to pay attention to other priority issues, such as the revitalization of the economy.

72. Considerable challenges still lie ahead, however. The progress achieved so far can be sustained only if further concrete and dynamic action is taken to begin implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and dismantling the militia, redeployment of State authority, identification and preparations for the elections. I urge the parties to agree without delay on the modalities for implementing the crucial identification process. The United Nations would be prepared to assist in the creation of a credible and transparent implementation process, if so requested by the parties, and if provided with the appropriate resources. As long as the militias and the Young Patriots remain mobilized, the security situation will remain fragile and potentially volatile. In the

meantime, the disarmament process, including disarmament of the militias, must start without delay.

73. The processes leading to the full implementation of the road map for the peace process are extremely complex, and will require the mobilization of significant resources, as well as the full adherence of the Ivorian parties to the principles and objectives laid down in the peace agreements and Security Council resolutions.

74. It should also be emphasized that the window of opportunity is very narrow, and time is running out. Any further delays or disruptions in the peace process will mean that there will not be sufficient time to complete all the critical tasks, if elections are to be held by October. It will, therefore, be important for the Council to send a strong signal to the parties that, if they fail to meet the October election deadline, the international community will not be in a position to simply once again agree to extend the current governance arrangements.

75. The January disturbances in the country have further emphasized the need to reinforce UNOCI operational capabilities to enable it not only to perform its original mandate more effectively, but also to perform the new challenging tasks ascribed by the road map. During the months ahead, the Operation will need to focus on curbing potential threats and helping to create a more secure environment to facilitate the implementation of key aspects of the peace process, including the provision of overall security, disarmament, the dismantling of the militias, the identification process, the extension of State administration and the preparation of the elections. All these tasks will now have to be carried out simultaneously and in an extremely compressed timeframe. The reinforcement of UNOCI from UNMIL authorized by the Council in February temporarily enhanced the Operation's response preparedness. However, the ability of UNOCI to address possible disturbances remains limited. In addition, some of the potential spoilers do not seem to have renounced their objectives. It is clear that there remains the potential for serious destabilization of the peace process and a rapid deterioration of the security situation cannot be ruled out. I wish once more to appeal to the Council to give positive consideration to my recommendations on reinforcement of UNOCI as contained in my report of 3 January and reiterated in my letter dated 22 March to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/184). There exists a serious risk that any unravelling of the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire could spill over into the subregion, particularly to Liberia.

76. The recent efforts of the Ivorian leaders to seek a peaceful settlement should also be translated into concrete measures to guarantee the freedom of movement and operations of UNOCI, Licorne and the humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations throughout the country. I wish to remind the national authorities of their responsibility for ensuring the security and freedom of movement of all international personnel operating in Côte d'Ivoire. Those committing attacks against the United Nations will be held personally accountable for their actions. There is also an urgent need to put an end to the culture of impunity in the country.

77. The dynamic partnership between regional leaders, including the African Union and ECOWAS, and the United Nations has proved essential to secure the parties' continued commitment to fulfil their obligations under the various peace agreements. I wish to commend the vital role played by President Obasanjo in helping to restore normalcy in the country in the wake of the January disturbances. I also acknowledge the important contributions being made by the new Chairman of

the African Union, President Sassou Nguesso, and the South African mediation. In order to maintain and consolidate the momentum generated recently towards the implementation of the road map, the international community should continue to demonstrate unity of action and purpose in dealing with Côte d'Ivoire.

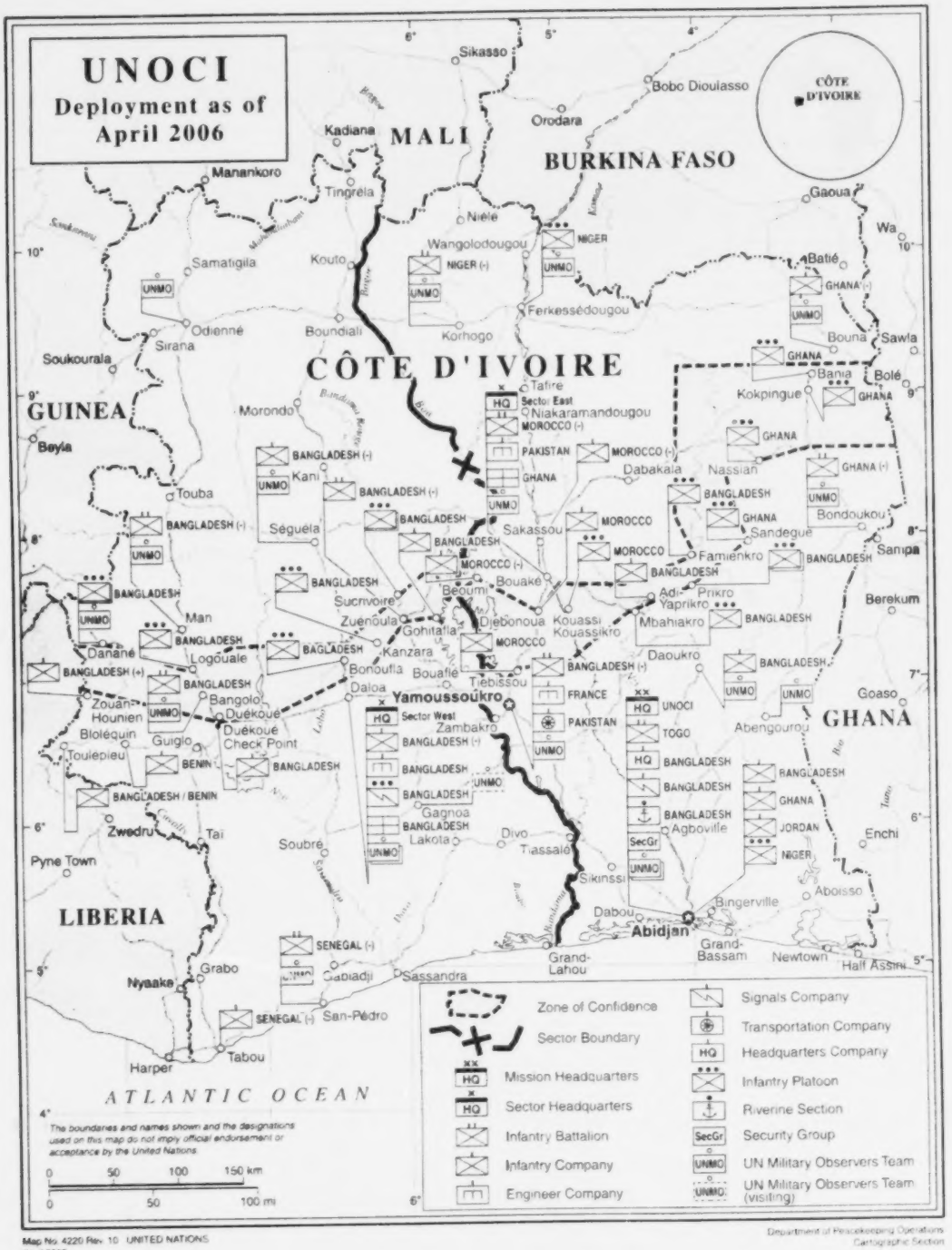
78. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative, Pierre Schori, and the civilian and military staff of UNOCI for their efforts in support of the quest for sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire. I also wish to thank the High Representative for the elections, Antonio Monteiro, for his remarkable achievements in a difficult period. Mr. Monteiro relinquished his post last month. Similarly, I should like to express my gratitude to the United Nations country team, humanitarian and development organizations and bilateral donors, and regional and subregional organizations, for their major contribution to the peace process.

Annex

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire: military and civilian police strength as at 31 March 2006

	Military component				
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police unit*
Argentina					
Bangladesh	10	12	3 474	3 496	125
Benin	9	6	304	319	
Bolivia	3			3	
Brazil	4	6		10	
Cameroon					
Canada					
Central African Republic					
Chad	3			3	
China	7			7	
Croatia	3			3	
Djibouti					
Dominican Republic	4			4	
Ecuador	2			2	
El Salvador	3			3	
France	2	15	171	188	
Guatemala	5			5	
Ghana	10	6	397	413	
Gambia	5	1		6	
Guinea	4			4	
India	8			8	
Ireland	2			2	
Jordan	7	12	200	219	250
Kenya	5	4		9	
Lebanon					
Madagascar					
Morocco	1	2	730	733	
Namibia	3			3	
Nepal	3			3	
Niger	6	1	364	371	
Nigeria	5			5	
Pakistan	11	5	364	380	
Paraguay	9	4		13	
Peru	3			3	

Country	Military component					Civilian police
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police unit	
Poland	2			2		
Philippines	4	3		7		10
Republic of Moldova	4			4		
Romania	5			5		
Russian Federation	12			12		
Senegal	3	7	313	323		42
Serbia and Montenegro	3			3		
Togo	6	4	291	301		1
Tunisia	4	2		6		
Turkey						23
Uruguay	2	1		3		9
Uganda	2	2		4		
Vanuatu						4
Yemen	6			6		2
Zambia	2			2		
Total	**192**	**93**	**6 608**	**6 893**	**375**	**321**


UNOCI
Deployment as of
April 2006
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
MALI
BURKINA FASO
GUINEA
LIBERIA
GHANA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Sikasso
Bobo Dioulasso
Orodara
Kadiana
Manankoro
Tingréla
Niéllé
Wangolodougou
Gaoua
Wa
Batié
Samatigila
Kouto
Ferkessédougou
Odienné
Sirana
Boundiali
Korhogo
Bouna
Sawla
Soukourala
Tafiré
Kokpingue
Bolé
Bania
Morondo
Niakaramandougou
Beyla
Touba
Kani
Séguéla
Dabakala
Nassian
Bondoukou
Sakassou
Sandégué
Samapa
Famienkro
Bouaké
Beoumi
Prikro
Berekum
Sucnvoire
Zuenoula
Gohitafla
Diebonoua
Kouassi Kouassikro
Mbahiakro
Man
Danané
Logouale
Kanzara
Daoukro
Bonoufla
Bouafle
Tiebissou
Goaso
Zouan-Hounien
Bangolo
Duékoué
Yamoussoukro
Zambakro
Abengourou
Bloléquin
Guiglo
Toulepleu
Gagnoa
Divo
Soubré
Lakota
Tiassalé
Zwedru
Tai
Pyne Town
Sikinssi
Aboisso
Bingerville
Dabou
Abidjan
Grand-Bassam
Newtown
Half Assini
Enchi
Nyaake
Grabo
Sassandra
Grand-Lahou
San-Pédro
Tabou
Harper
Zone of Confidence
Sector Boundary
Mission Headquarters
Sector Headquarters
Infantry Battalion
Infantry Company
Engineer Company
Signals Company
Transportation Company
Headquarters Company
Infantry Platoon
Riverine Section
Security Group
UN Military Observers Team
UN Military Observers Team (visiting)
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
0 50 100 150 km
0 50 100 mi
Map No. 4220 Rev. 10 UNITED NATIONS
April 2006
Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section